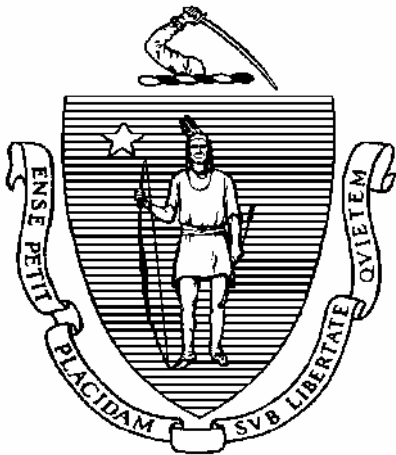


COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS



Senior Community Services Employment Program State Coordination Plan 2008 – 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section One: Purpose of the State Plan.....	3
Section Two: Involvement of Organizations and Individuals.....	3
Section Three: Solicitation and Collection of Public Comments.....	4
Section Four: Basic Distribution of SCSEP Positions within the State.....	4
Location of Positions	
Rural and Urban Populations	
Specific Population Groups	
Section Five: Supporting Employment Opportunities for Participants.....	9
Section Six: Increasing Participant Placement in Unsubsidized Employment and Employer Outreach.....	12
Section Seven: Community Service Needs.....	13
Section Eight: Coordination with Other Programs, Initiatives and Entities.....	13
Section Nine: Avoidance of Disruptions in Service.....	19
Section Ten: Improvement of SCSEP Services.....	19
Section Eleven: List of Appendices	19

Section 1. Purpose of the SCSEP 2008-2011 State Coordination Plan

Massachusetts recognizes the goal of the Senior Community Services Employment Program to be of a dual nature. As conveyed in the Older Americans' Act Amendments of 2006, SCSEP's mission is to:

- ✧ Enable older low income job seekers to develop the skills and self-confidence to obtain unsubsidized jobs and become financially self-sufficient; and
- ✧ Provide valuable community service at on-the-job training sites, as a means to improve a participant's self-sufficiency, perform meaningful civic service, and to strengthen communities.

While developing the *SCSEP 2008-2011 State Coordination Plan*, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (ELD) has taken the opportunity to take a longer term strategic view of the SCSEP in the state, including the SCSEP's role in workforce development and the role our service network for older adults can take to advance the interests of older workers in their local economies. Under the designation of Governor Du val Patrick, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs is responsible for the development and submission of the *SCSEP 2008-2011 State Coordination Plan*. The State Plan presents an opportunity for the Commonwealth to build new partnerships as well as strengthen existing ones, create more employment opportunities and establish more outreach partners and training locations in the state.

Section 2. Involvement of Organizations and Individuals

As the State Unit on Aging, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs is responsible for implementation and monitoring all Older Americans Act Programs within the Commonwealth. Older residents of the Commonwealth are well served through a network of 23 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and 27 Aging Service Access Points (ASAP). Those services include a comprehensive needs assessment, authorization of and payment for a range of long term care supports, including homemaker, chore, transportation, meal preparation, and home delivered meals.

Our partners under Workforce Investment Act as well as public and private non-profit agencies and organizations serving elders were involved in the development of this plan. The *State Coordination Plan* was presented to our partners and interested parties for review and comments. Our partners include Councils on Aging, Aging Services Access Points (ASAP), Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), AARP of Massachusetts, host training sites, Workforce Investment Act partners, including the 16 regional Workforce Investment Boards and 36 One Stop Career Centers, and the National Sponsors: Senior Service America, Inc., Operation A.B.L.E. of Greater Boston, the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging, and the National Urban League.

Section 3. Solicitation and Collection of Public Comments

The *State Coordination Plan* was made available for review and comment on ELD's website (www.800ageinfo.com). The website allows any organization or individual with Internet access to comment on the plan from any location and at any time. A wide variety of organizations that provide services to older adults were notified of the opportunity to comment on the State Plan.

The opportunity for written public comment was provided to all organizations who wanted to be involved in the development of this plan as well as any other interested parties. Public comments were due by June 20, 2008. After the public comment and final document was prepared, it was presented to the Secretary of Elder Affairs for final approval. All comments received regarding the State Coordination Plan are attached in Appendix E.

Section 4. Basic Distribution of SCSEP Positions within the State .

a. Location of Positions

The Equitable Distribution Report (Section 508, 2006 OAA Amendments) provides the basic information needed to assess the location of the eligible population and the current distribution of much needed employment. The attached equitable distribution report provides a basis to determine the collective progress made by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the National Sponsors towards an equitable distribution of program slots.

The most recent Equitable Distribution Report for Program Year 2008 (Attachment D) shows a loss of authorized slots across the board. (Although the Equitable Distribution report shows authorized slot levels, slots are modified due to our state's higher minimum wage of \$8.00/hour).

The National Sponsors are real partners with the state agency and have a stake in making sure we reach as many people as possible. Senior Service America is going to work with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to shift slots into the four counties needing additional slots to achieve equity. Negotiations are ongoing with regard to achieving equity in the following counties: Berkshire (11), Bristol (-2), Essex (-7), Norfolk (-10) and Middlesex Counties (-2). We shall seek final approval for these authorized slot movements from the Department of Labor by June 30, 2008.

b. Rural and Urban Populations

The distribution of individuals residing in rural and urban areas of Massachusetts is presented in the chart below. Our rural areas of Berkshire and Franklin Counties have adequate resources to meet program requirements.

MASSACHUSETTS			
Population	Rural *	Urban *	Total
Year			
1980	14,029	5,723,064	5,737,093
1990	17,651	59,981,774	6,016,425
2000	24,507	6,324,590	6,349,097
2007	26,016	6,423,739	6,449,755
Income			
2004	49,874	43,020	43,047
2005	50,515	43,473	43,501
Percent change	1.3	1.1	1.1
Poverty rate (percent)			
1979	8.2	9.6	9.6
1989	6.4	8.9	8.9
1999	7.4	9.3	9.3
2005	5.8	10.3	10.3
Employment			
Total number of jobs			
2004	23698	4035984	4059682
2005	24434	4092512	4116946
Data updated March 21, 2008			

c. Specific Population Groups

The chart below ¹ shows the distribution of eligible individuals who are afforded priority service as provided under the Older Americans' Act, section 518(b):

MASSACHUSETTS PROFILE OF GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS		
CHARACTERISTICS 2000		
	NUMBER	PERCENT
TOTAL POPULATION	6,437,193	100.00%
MALE	3,116,536	48.40%
FEMALE	3,320,657	51.60%
AGE		
65 years and over	856,886	13.30%
Grandparents as Caregivers one or more own grandchildren under 18 years	98,235	100.00%
Grandparent responsible for grandchildren	27,915	28.40%
VETERAN STATUS		

¹ US Census 2000

Civilian population 18 years and over	4,847,708	100.00%
Civilian veterans	558,933	11.50%
DISABILITY STATUS OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION		
Population 21 to 64 years	116,151	8.60%
Population 65 years and over	663,354	17.90%
	305,241	37.80%
LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME		
Population 5 years and over	5,954,249	100.00%
Language other than English	1,115,570	18.70%
Speak English less than well	459,073	7.70%
SPANISH	370,011	6.20%
Speak English less than well	162,908	2.70%
Other Indo-European languages	529,784	8.90%
Speak English less than well	194,256	3.30%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	171,253	2.90%
Speak English less than well	89,931	1.50%
POVERTY STATUS		
Individuals	573,421	9.30%
18 YEARS AND OVER	396,038	8.50%
65 years and over	71,435	8.90%
Unrelated individuals 15 years and over	230,045	19.10%

The outreach and recruitment methods we use to reach both urban and rural populations are quite varied and include :

- 1) Presentations to community and civic groups
- 2) Public presentations
- 3) Brochures in supermarkets, libraries, community bulletin boards, doctors offices
- 4) Newspapers/newsletters
- 5) Fliers
- 6) Web site postings
- 7) Recruitment at One Stop Career Centers
- 8) Attending community functions
- 9) Job search training
- 10) Recruiting at veterans clubs and organizations
- 11) Classes on resume writing, interviewing skills, job search techniques

Recruitment is done through our sub grantees and partners in the community. Veterans are recruited through local VFW halls, veterans groups and the One Stop Care Center. Sub-grantees make presentations to staff of Area Agencies on Aging, Councils on Aging for those 60 years of age and older, Chambers of Commerce, Vocational Rehabilitation Schools, local community colleges, community action agencies, minority

organizations, homeless shelters, welfare offices, employment security offices, English as a Second Language agencies as well as disability agencies across the state. Our sub-grantees will continue to work with the National Sponsors in their area to coordinate an effective outreach to hard-to-serve groups.

Currently, Senior Service America Inc. territory in Massachusetts is predominantly “urban” per the DOL definition of urban. Below are tables which outline the number of individuals Senior Service America, Inc. and Operation A.B.L.E. sub grantees have provided services to from July 1, 2007 to the present according to rural and urban residential areas as well as the number of individuals with the “greatest economic need.”

Authorized and Served Slots for SSAI :

	Rural				Urban			
	Authorized	Served	At or Below 100% Poverty Level	Active	Authorized	Served	At or Below 100% Poverty Level	Active
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Worcester	0	0	0	0	60	61	60	42
Citizens for Citizens, Inc.	0	0	0	0	101	122	96	83
City of Springfield Department of Elder Affairs/Good Life Center	0	0	0	0	119	134	105	97
City of Worcester/Catholic Charities	0	0	0	0	79	70	66	52
Coastline Elderly Services, Inc.	0	0	0	0	95	86	66	65
Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands, Inc.	4	1	1	0	51	42	30	34
Total	4	1	1	0	505	515	423	373

Authorized and Served Slots for Operation A.B.L.E.:

Counties	Authorized	Rural Served	At or Below 100% Poverty	Active	Authorized	Urban Served	At or Below 100% Poverty	Active
Essex/Nat'l					111	136	105	89
Essex/State					35	19	17	15
Middlesex/Nat'l					149	146	115	76
Middlesex/State					51	21	18	12
Suffolk					14	43	39	28
Worcester					39	69	62	38
Total					399	434	356	258

As an example of the strategies used by our largest national sponsor in Massachusetts to increase outreach to priority individuals, see the materials below that showcase how Senior Service America implements an ongoing targeted outreach strategy. Senior Service America's sub grantees implement many outreach strategies that target priority participants such as:

- Utilizing information available on census software and web sites to identify specific neighborhoods in which individuals who are 65 and low income reside;
- Linking into intermediary networks that are most likely to have significant contact with priority individuals, such as health clinics and other health -care providers, transportation and other service providers to the elderly, homeless shelters, veterans' organizations and VA offices, food banks, and ex-offender programs
- Consulting with local Councils on Aging and/or aging adult protective services providers to identify those at risk;
- Utilizing current as well as former SCSEP participants to recruit prospective participants;
- Presenting at community and civic groups;
- Partnering with agencies that serve non -English speaking individuals; and
- Utilizing referrals from the Career Centers; Massachusetts Transitional Assistance; Community Action Committee; Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and Food Stamp Division.

In addition to the recruitment methods of SSA, Operation A.B.L.E. also employs the following methods:

- Stations SCSEP Employment Specialists at several of the One -Stop Career Centers
- Employs a full-time Director of Communications who is dedicated to SCSEP outreach
- Places articles in community newspapers highlighting the SCSEP program
- Targets mailings to job seekers 55+ who attended the One -Stop Career Centers
- Hosts weekly Open Houses where they discuss the program and its benefits
- Arranges for periodic inserts in participant paychecks inviting participation from friends and others
- Talking with participants about openings in the program
- Talking with training sites used by the public
- Continually outreaching to fuel assistance programs, homeless shelters, veterans services office and veterans counselors in the career center
- Convening city-based meetings with elder service providers

Across the board, when selecting participants from among eligible applicants, priority is given to individuals who meet the OAA sec. 518(b) criteria. National sponsors and the State SCSEP Director monitor participant data to ensure priority groups are being served.

Section 5. Supporting Employment Opportunities for Participants

By county, we have identified the current and projected occupations that will provide the most substantial employment opportunities for SCSEP participants.

Bristol County

The south coast in Bristol County, especially the city of New Bedford, has been experiencing the highest growth in the Construction/Trades category – especially in the titles of Mason, Welder, and Electrician. Retail/Customer Service/ Food Service represents another modestly high growth area but this can be partly attributed to the seasonal trend of increased tourism and hospitality during the spring and summer months. There is potential for SCSEP participants in the Transportation/Delivery category, due to a demand for Class D drivers for small passenger vans and also for local ground deliveries of parcels and/or parts. The Finance category continues to grow

and demand for Office Assistant/ Admin Assistant/Receptionist may offer opportunities for SCSEP participants especially for those with some accounting and computer skills.

Plymouth County

Employment growth is anticipated in health care – especially in nursing homes, assisted living and Adult Day Care. Although most of these openings are expected in degreed positions, there will be some potential for SCSEP individuals to fill the entry level support positions of nurse's aides, homemakers, home health aides, personal care attendants, and activity, physical or dietary aides.

Another area that should provide opportunities for our participants would be in child care. There is a need for teacher's aides, teachers, and lead teachers in child day care settings as Massachusetts continues to implement its Welfare to Work agenda. There is also opportunity for professional growth in this field with a little additional training at a local community college.

Worcester County

Worcester County, particularly the city of Worcester, has been experiencing growth in the healthcare arena. While most of the new positions require advanced degrees and training, there is a potential for new ancillary support positions to become available for SCSEP participants such as janitorial and entry level clerical positions. A large growth area in Worcester County is scientific research. Again while the positions require advanced degrees, there will also be additional support positions created for the research facilities. We anticipate that there will be additional clerical, janitorial, food service positions.

Franklin County

Anticipated employment growth areas in Franklin County include health care, particularly in nursing homes. A special niche is developing in the area of manufacturing, particularly the plastics industry. Other areas that should provide expanded opportunities for SCSEP individuals include food services, hotel services and retail. More than 21% of all jobs in the area are in the field of education in the private secondary systems and the university system. It should be noted that 82% of all employees in Franklin County are employed by companies that have 0-19 employees.

Hampshire County

Hampshire County has a significant part of its economy devoted to higher education. While most of the new positions require advanced degrees and training, there is a potential for new ancillary support positions to become available such as janitorial and entry level clerical positions. Food service, hotel services and retail present opportunities for SCSEP participants, especially the big-box retailers located in the town of Hadley where the Hampshire Mall and the Mountain Farms Mall are located. In the rest of the county, retail opportunities are most prevalent in small, family-owned businesses.

Hampden County

The two of the three large sectors, Health Care and Social Assistance and Retail, comprise almost 30% of all jobs in Hampden County. Of these two, Health Care will account for nearly 64,000 new jobs during the period 2004 – 2014. This arena has shown the largest gain and potential for SCSEP participants. Residential Care facilities are of particular significance. While more than half (56%) of all new jobs related to growth will require an Associates Degree, we anticipate that there will be additional work in the clerical, janitorial, and food service positions associated with these growth areas.

Berkshire County

The three large sectors, Health Care and Social Assistance (16.7%), Retail Trade (14.1%), and Leisure and Hospitality (14.1%) comprise almost 45% of all jobs in Berkshire County, with Health Care and Social Assistance growing the most quickly. All three arenas offer potential for SCSEP participants. Of five occupations generating the most new jobs in the period 2004 - 2014, two are particularly suitable for SCSEP participants; Retail Salespersons (+10,390) and Janitors and Cleaners (+7,650).

Cape Cod (Barnstable, Dukes, Nantucket Counties)

Cape Cod has not shown the same job growth as other counties in Massachusetts. However, as with other counties, the same three sectors have shown the most vigor and represent the most potential for SCSEP participants. These sectors are: Leisure and Hospitality, Retail Trade, and Health Care and Social Assistance, with the last sector showing the most gain.

Substantial Employment Opportunities

As the largest national sponsor operating in Massachusetts, Senior Service America has analyzed the presence of high growth occupations in counties wherein they operate; however, the findings are relevant to all areas within our state. Their extensive analysis considered both the enrollees' skill level, employment history, education as well as the challenges of those most in need. Their analysis identified the following occupations would provide significant employment opportunities for SCSEP enrollees -

- "a chance at success" that with the proper training and guidance:

- 1) Health Care and Social Assistance
- 2) Retail
- 3) Food Service
- 4) Home Health Aides
- 5) Day Care Aides
- 6) Hospitality

Types of Training Positions at Host Agencies and Skills Training Offerings to Prepare Participants for these Employment Opportunities

The state agency and its sub grantees will continue using our core program practices, described herein, to make certain that community service employment assignments are truly providing skills training that meet the needs of both SCSEP participants and employers. Our sub-grantees utilize the IEP, in partnership with the participant and host agency supervisor, to ensure that community service employment assignments are providing skills training that meets the needs of the participant and host agency . The sub-grantees monitor participants at least three times per year at their community service employment assignments. During those visits, sub -grantee staff review and update the IEP with both the participant and host agency supervisor. Sub -grantees continue to monitor the training to ensure the participant is being prepared for unsubsidized employment through the acquisition of transferable skills in demand by local employers. In addition, as funding permits and where applicable, sub-grantees develop IEPs, in partnership with participants, which combine community service employment with other permissible training (e.g., classroom training or on -the-job experience (OJE) in the private for-profit sector). (See Appendix B for a sample of our host training sites.)

Section 6. Increasing Participant Placement in Unsubsidized Employment and Employer Outreach

SCSEP programs in Massachusetts use a variety of means to achieve the overall goal of placing participants in unsubsidized employment. Our SCSEP program personnel: work closely with the One Stop Career Centers and refer participants for job search skill activities and classes; encourage host agencies to provide needed on -the-job training to make participants competitive for in-demand jobs; review weekly classified advertisements and refer participants to job opportunities; discuss job search strategies and IEP goals with both the participant and host agency supervisor during monitoring visits; encourage participants to take computer -related courses; promote the value of older workers in the community; maintain strong relationships with host agencies; cold call agencies; participate in job fairs; and maintain and review a listing of potential job leads.

In particular, to build strong relationships with employers, Massachusetts SCSEP programs employ strategies such as: attending Chamber of Commerce meetings, participating in round-table discussions with entrepreneurs, work ing with the Executive Directors of their agencies to promote SCSEP with employers, plac ing program notices in the Commerce Section of the daily newspaper, cold calling, networking within the community, attending career fairs , and participating in employer groups and coalitions.

Our host agencies and the local One Stop Career Centers provide the enrollee with the tools, skill building opportunities and work experience to achieve the goal of

unsubsidized employment. Through the host agencies, the enrollee receives one-on-one supervision daily, training in the area of interest, feedback on progress, and actual hands on experience. Through the One Stops, the enrollee benefits from access to the job club, job coaching, and assistance with resume writing, computer access, extensive job listings, and interaction with peers who are also looking for unsubsidized employment.

The Commonwealth believes this combination of activities, along with an aggressive Individual Employment Plan monitored by our sub-grantees, are critical factors for attaining the goal of unsubsidized employment for SCSEP participants.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has identified strategies effective for retention which include careful selection when making the initial placement; discussion with employers to ensure participant's skill level, interest, and work ethics match up with placement; follow up shortly after employment (and periodically thereafter) providing counseling when issues or problems develop on the job; offering support services as needed for job retention; and providing good customer service for the employer and placed participant.

Section 7. Community Service Needs Response

Our SCSEP sub grantees give priority to those non-profit agencies providing the most needed community services. Those agencies provide excellent training but, due to limited funding, often cannot provide the opportunity for unsubsidized employment. Among these agencies, top priority is given to sites that provide needed community services, and offer training in areas where the skills are transferable to available jobs, and have the potential to hire the participant. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its sub grantees are continually searching for new training sites. Assignments to training sites are made based on the needs of the participant and the training site. (See Appendix B)

One of our national sponsors, Senior Service America Inc., periodically surveys their sub grantees to learn about additional community service needs. Recent results included: (1) private, nonprofit nursing homes as well as adult day care settings where participants can serve the residents as dietitian aides, receptionists, activity aides; (2) library aides in town libraries; (3) teachers' aides in public schools; (4) clerical and other staffing support in local service organizations.

Section 8. Coordination with Other Programs, Initiatives and Entities

We plan to undertake the following activities to strengthen our ability to achieve SCSEP goals via improved coordination of our activities with other entities within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

(1) Coordination of Activities with the State's Title I WIA Activities

Coordination with the OSCCs:

1. Continue conducting educational sessions for staff about the unique aspects of serving mature workers, issues include:
 - a. SCSEP eligible are hardest to serve due to barriers, including:
 - i. transportation
 - ii. language
 - iii. disability
 - iv. need for more pre-employment skills development and training
2. Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Area Agencies on Aging and Councils on Aging will explore ways to partner with the regional One Stop Career Centers to reach out to more employers about alternative work arrangements and phased retirement programs that may attract (or keep) older workers. Our AAAs and COAs have resources that could be very useful in a social marketing campaign.
3. Continue to serve as a recruitment arm for the One Stop Career Center – a core activity of the SCSEP program.
4. Explore the One Stop Career Centers' investment in follow-up services and post-placement services that help ensure employee retention and advancement.
5. Improve how SCEPS work with One Stop Career Centers by boosting the level of referrals to the SCSEP made within all one Stop Career Centers.

Coordination with Regional WIBs:

1. We will work with local WIBs to develop better strategies for linking the older worker population with businesses that are searching for skilled workers by arranging for increased outreach efforts by aging services organizations in our service network. A key step will be to develop Councils on Aging and Area Agencies on Aging as entry points for outreaching to and connecting older workers with the One Stop Career Centers, with the use of and support by One Stop Career Center materials and staff.
2. A second key step will be for us to provide Councils on Aging with materials they can use to encourage the public and private employers in their communities to contact the One Stop Career Center and SCSEP with local job openings. In particular, we plan on coordinating with Councils on Aging so they can:
 - a. Post their job openings at the One Stop Career Center and with SCSEP.
 - b. Become an Age-Friendly Certified Employer.

- c. Promote the employment of older workers to local businesses, both public and private, and promote their use of the One Stop Career Centers to post jobs and recruit workers.
 - d. Encourage other employers to become an Age -Friendly Certified Employer.
 - e. Write and speak about the benefits of hiring older workers in their newsletters and public events.
 - f. Include older workers' issues in their brochures and outreach efforts.
 - g. Make sure the information and referral staffs of municipal Councils on Aging and regional Area Agencies on Aging are aware of training programs and employee assistance services and can make appropriate referrals to employment and training programs.
3. Work with the WIBs as partners in a campaign to encourage businesses to:
- a. Be receptive to posting jobs via state and local job posting services by identifying and posting job openings at the One Stop Career Center.
 - b. Recruit mature workers from the One Stop Career Centers.
 - c. Consider adopting alternative work arrangements and phased retirement programs to attract and retain mature workers.
 - d. Provide feedback to the public workforce investment system about the quality of referrals and services received at the local One Stop Career Centers.
4. Work with the WIBs and One Stop Career Centers to monitor the performance of local One Stop Career Centers on the percentage of mature older workers placed in jobs. As needed, develop new strategies in response to low performance findings and incorporate these plans into the local WIB work plans.

Coordination with the Statewide Massachusetts WIB:

1. Work with the MA WIB to enhance the services of the One Stop Career Centers provided to older workers 55 and older by developing an older worker program. Such a program would mean the following changes to the current workforce development system:
- a. Train One Stop Career Center staff about the different employment needs of mature workers.
 - b. Make Career Centers more user -friendly for people 55 and older
 - c. Work more with employers that hire older workers
 - d. Offer computer classes geared to people 55 and over
 - e. Look at ways to improve referrals to SCSEP program

(2) National Sponsor -- Senior Service America Inc.

The service delivery capacity of Senior Service America Inc. will continue to be based on the strength of its diverse sub grantee network. Because nearly all sub grantees in Massachusetts operate other programs in addition to SCSEP, the association with these other organizations benefits older job -seekers. These organizations include faith -based providers, Area Agencies on Aging, and community service agencies. SSAI sub

grantees take advantage of services offered by local providers of ABE, GED and ESL, including services available at libraries, One-Stop Career Centers, community colleges, and community-based organizations.

Senior Service America Inc. sub grantees give some examples of current collaboration with WIA providers includes: (1) serving as a member of the Workforce Investment Board and the Mature Worker subcommittee as well as the Career Center Partners' Committee; (2) co-enrolling participants in One-Stop services; and (3) assigning participants to community service work-assignments at the New Bedford and Taunton Career Centers for referrals and leads on "hot jobs".

SSAI sub grantees also shared some examples of current coordination and collaboration with other providers: (1) partnering with the Massachusetts Career Development Institute to recruit participants; (2) referrals to the Massachusetts rehabilitation programs; (3) partnering with Worcester State College to enroll participants in the ESL program; (4) partnering with community schools and Cape Cod Community College for computer training and GED instruction. Our partner in Springfield, the City of Springfield Department of Elder Affairs, developed a special project with the Springfield Fire Department to install smoke detectors in the homes of citizens age 60 or above. To date over 2,000 smoke detectors have been installed.

(3) Collaborations with other public and private entities and programs that provide services to older adults, including both activities funded under the Older American's Act and state funded aging services and organizations.

1. One Stop Career Centers have staff available to help mature workers navigate computer tools such as web based job sites. We will explore how to build additional sites where older workers can receive coaching on how to use the e-tools. We shall examine providing supports such as 'coaches' at municipal Councils on Aging, someone who can "walk a person thru posting" job résumés to internet based job sites. In this technological day and age, this is an incredibly important and critical support needed to finding unsubsidized jobs.

2. We will continue to work with the AAAs and other service providers to coordinate access to the full array of social services. Our sub-grantees refer participants to the local AAA I&R specialist and/or caregiver specialist, SHIP Program, and other services in order to make sure they are aware of all the ways they can stretch their limited pre-employment income and also use other supports as needed to remove barriers to employment.

3. We will provide COAs and Area Agencies on Aging with materials they can use to encourage the public and private employers in their communities and regions, respectively, to contact the One Stop Career Center and SCSEP with local job openings. In particular, we plan on coordinating with the COAs and AAAs so they will:

- a. Post their own job openings at the One Stop Career Centers and with SCSEP
 - b. Become an Age-Friendly Certified Employer
 - c. Promote the employment of older workers to local businesses, both public and private, and promote their use of the One Stop Career Centers to post jobs and recruit workers.
 - d. Encourage other employers to become an Age -Friendly Certified Employer
 - e. Write and speak about the benefits of hiring older workers in their newsletters and public events
 - f. Include issues facing older workers in their brochures and public outreach addresses
 - g. Make sure the information and referral staffs of municipal Councils on Aging and regional Area Agencies on Aging are aware of training programs and employee assistance services and can make appropriate referrals to employment and training programs.
4. We will organize a statewide process of local AAAs pulling together health service and long term care services providers, such as certified home health agencies, nursing homes, and home care companies, to discuss ways they can connect with the One Stop Career Centers and SCSEPs to recruit older workers and to underscore the benefits of hiring older workers.
5. We will work with the AAAs to ensure they are involved in the local WIBs so they can become more involved as representatives of older workers and their issues . In particular, we will work with the AAAs to find and adopt local solutions for connecting older workers with jobs in the local economy and for convincing local employers to adopt more flexible HR benefits and policies so as to retain experienced workers and attract new mature worker recruits.
6. We shall continue to work with our partners to provide alternatives to our participants. This Partnership includes vocational education, literacy programs, veterans programs and faith based organizations. (See Appendix C for a sample list of partners.)

(4) Leveraging Resources from Other Key Partners in the State to Support SCSEP Goals and Activities

1. Continue to promote training opportunities at local and state college campuses. In Massachusetts, free tuition at the state's colleges is offered to all residents aged 65 and older. This helps workers acquire skills they need to connect with jobs that have a livable wage in today's economy.
2. We have just embarked on a 2 year project, a 50+ Worker Innovation Taskforce, which seeks to promote retention and recruitment of older workers by educating employers about the benefits of hiring older workers and making their employee policies

more flexible so as to avoid total loss thru traditional retirement. The Massachusetts 50+ Workforce Innovation Task Force is a public/private *partnership* of business, labor, government, civic and academic leaders and organizations, to develop a state-wide initiative to promote the recruitment, retention, and engagement of the age 50+ workforce throughout Massachusetts. This 50+ Worker Innovation Taskforce initiative will follow the model that has worked successfully in Arizona. It will both imitate and innovate, following the outlines of a state initiative that is working but also adapting the initiative to the needs of the Commonwealth. The Arizona Mature Workforce Initiative implementation strategy encompasses five key areas:

- Public Education & Awareness – raise state government, public and employer awareness of aging workforce and its potential impact on Massachusetts businesses and economy through a public education campaign
- Training and Technical Assistance – provide support for employers in managing a more age diverse workforce, restructuring jobs and providing affordable skills training for mature workers
- Linkages between Employers & Mature Workers – find ways to connect mature workers and employers that do not violate anti-discrimination laws and that are credible and accessible for businesses and workers alike including creation of a centralized mature worker job bank.
- Innovations & Incentives –identify new policies and practices to help attract and retain mature workers, including benefits packages, pay plans, phased retirement, mentoring programs, part-time and part-year jobs, consulting and other flexible arrangements including creation of an age friendly employer certification recognition
- Policy & Regulatory Changes – identify and recommend changes to any state laws and regulations that limit the employment of mature workers

Section 9. Avoidance of Disruptions in Service

In the case of any transition of positions, SSAI staff will ensure clear communication and coordination with participants, host agencies, other grantees, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, and USDOL, where appropriate. The Federal Project Officer will be consulted with and will subsequently approve any movements of positions. SSAI will not initiate any movement or transfer of positions until the Director of Employment with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs has been notified. Through any transition process, SSAI will ensure that participants are paid and that where possible, shifts will be gradual and ensure minimum disruption to the participants.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts does not foresee any slot movement. We will however review on a quarterly basis the economic situation in each county and will from time to time move slots on a temporary basis to those counties in need. This temporary movement of slots will have no impact on current enrollees. We shall ensure that if movement of slots becomes necessary there will be no disruption in service or inconvenience to the participants.

Section 10. Improvement of SCSEP Services Response:

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs, acting on behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and in concert with the national SCSEP sponsors, is continuously working to improve relationships with our partners in the community, the aging network and employers across the Commonwealth.

Staff members attend DOL sponsored conferences and trainings as well as participate in any DOL recommended web-based trainings. Staff also makes use of the SPARQ management tools to assist us in making the program better.

With the aging population that needs to continue working, and being the only employment and training program geared towards people 55 and over, we must continually strengthen our ties in the community and with employers. We need to look at the following:

- 1) develop new and/or expand current training options to reflect a changing economy
- 2) work closely with national sponsors to provide as many chances as possible for people 55 and over and residents of the Commonwealth.
- 3) improve and expand relationship/role at One Stop Career Centers
- 4) continue to promote the value of hiring an older worker.
- 5) consider best approaches to address challenges in recruiting most -in-need individuals as well as challenges in preparing these individuals for unsubsidized employment.

Section 11. List of Appendices

Appendix A - Sample list of training
Appendix B - Sample of Training Sites
Appendix C - Sample list of Partners
Appendix D - Copy of Equitable Distribution Report
Appendix E - Copy of Public Comments
Appendix F - Letters of Attestation of Participation in State Plan Development